

value invests our lives with significance by suggesting that it matters—and not only to ourselves—how they are lived. Given the belief that some kinds of activity are more valuable than others, we may go wrong, but we shall know that it is wrong, and that we might have gone right. Thus the belief in the intrinsic value of certain kinds of activity springs directly from the conviction of the fundamental worth-whileness of the universe. Lacking the latter, the Western world lacks necessarily the former. It has, in fact, lost the sense of value. Thus it prides itself continually on its ability to do things, without stopping to enquire whether the things are worth doing. Its boasted efficiency may indeed be defined as doing the wrong things in the right way. I take two examples.

No feature of Western civilization is more remarkable than the disparity between our mechanical skill and our social wisdom, between the powers we have won over nature, and the uses to which we put them. Science has given us powers fit for the gods and we bring to their use the mentality of schoolboys. Consider the mechanic by the roadside mending the carburetter of his car; in his knowledge of complex mechanism and in the skill with which he handles it, he is behaving like a superman. Consider the same mechanic ten minutes later, driving at forty miles an hour in a little hell of noise and dust and stench, unable to appreciate the country himself and precluding the appreciation of all who come near him; he is behaving like a congenital idiot.

Men of genius by the dozen, men of talent by the hundred have laboured that wireless might be. They succeeded, and the tittle tattle of the divorce court and the racing stable is broadcasted to the remoter Pacific, while the ultimate ether vibrates to the strains of negroid music. In war time our medical science displays an almost incredible skill in patching up shattered bodies, in order that the equally incredible imbecility of our political science may set chemical science to work to blow them to bits again. In our scientific knowledge, we are gods; in our ethics and politics, quarrelsome babies. And the babies are entrusted with the powers appropriate to the gods.

What is the bearing of the wisdom of the East upon the situation? In the light of what has been said it is not far to seek. It consists simply in reminding the West of the fact that scientific knowledge and power over nature are of no value in themselves; their value depends upon the use to which they are put. If they are used to promote right living, they are good; if the contrary, harmful. It is necessary, therefore, first to discern what is right living. "You have taught us," said an Eastern philosopher to me, "to fly in the air like birds, and to swim in the sea like fishes. But how to live on the earth you do not yet know."

Or take the case of motion. The capacity for rapid motion is, as is well known, the brightest jewel in the crown of Western civilization. But one of the reasons why we move so rapidly from place to place is that we are not satisfied to remain in any place. We are driven by an aversion from the place at which we are, rather than an attraction for